

Emergency First Responder's Guide for Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's Disease is a neurological disorder with no recognizable physical characteristics.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

- ✧ memory loss
- ✧ disorientation (time/place)
- ✧ impaired judgment
- ✧ absentmindedness
- ✧ carelessness in appearance
- ✧ inability to communicate
- ✧ inappropriate dress
- ✧ poor concentration
- ✧ asks the same questions over & over
- ✧ abilities/abstract thinking
- ✧ suspiciousness/paranoia
- ✧ hallucinations/delusions

TYPES OF EMERGENCY ENCOUNTERS

- ✧ wandering
- ✧ shoplifting
- ✧ auto crashes/traffic violations
- ✧ apparent intoxication
- ✧ fire
- ✧ indecent exposure
- ✧ homicide/suicide cases
- ✧ victimization/false reports
- ✧ domestic violence/A & B
- ✧ fall/injuries

METHODS OF IDENTIFICATION

- ✧ jewelry
 - Medic Alert and/or Safe Return bracelet
 - necklace/lapel pin
 - clothing labels/patches
 - electronic transmitters

✧ SAFE RETURN: 1-800-572-1122

✧ PROJECT LIFESAVER: 1-757-432-4382

HOW TO APPROACH/COMMUNICATE

- ☒ Identify yourself and calmly state your purpose.
- ☒ Employ a non-threatening tone of voice.
- ☒ Speak slowly and maintain a low-pitched voice.
- ☒ Maintain eye contact.
- ☒ Use short, familiar words. Ask “yes” or “no” questions.
- ☒ Ask one question at a time with plenty of response time.
- ☒ Repeat questions exactly as before if necessary.
- ☒ Substitute non-verbal for verbal communication.
- ☒ Attempt to remove the individual from noisy/stressful situations.
- ☒ Look for bracelet or clothing indicating memory impairment.
- ☒ Avoid use of restraints if possible.

***Wandering is a life-threatening concern
and should be treated as an emergency.***

CHECKLIST

- ☒ Begin immediate search-and-rescue efforts.
- ☒ Interview family or caregivers about previous wandering episodes.
- ☒ Obtain information about the individual that will assist in search.
 - description/picture
 - name and if they can communicate
 - shoe print description
- ☒ Research home or immediate areas.
- ☒ Determine if individual is enrolled in Safe Return or Project Lifesaver. Notify them immediately.
- ☒ Identify and secure “Place Last Seen” as a crime scene.
 - place barrier tape
 - secure scent articles
 - secure tracks
 - remove vehicles/stop engines
- ☒ Contact shift supervisor and/or SAR coordinator.
Request additional resources.

